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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 4970th meeting of the Security Council, held on 17 May 2004, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "United Nations peacekeeping operations", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council recalls its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and reaffirms its commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular, of the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States in conducting all peacekeeping and peace-building activities and the need for States to comply with their obligations under international law.

"The Security Council recognizes that, as experience confirms, United Nations peacekeeping operations play a critical role in the maintenance of international peace and security, preventing and containing conflicts, promoting compliance with international norms and Security Council decisions, and building peace in post-conflict situations.

"It further notes that United Nations peacekeeping missions are charged with increasingly difficult and complex mandates assigned to them by the Security Council and recognizes in this regard the need for a continued review of UN Peacekeeping.

"The Security Council notes that, in addition to the existing 14 United Nations peacekeeping operations, there has been a recent surge in demand for new peacekeeping operations. It is cognizant of the challenges this represents for the United Nations system in terms of generating necessary resources, personnel and other capabilities to meet the increased demand.

"The Security Council calls upon Member States to ensure that the United Nations is provided with full political and financial support to meet these challenges effectively, keeping in view the specific requirements of each mission and bearing in mind the human and financial resource implications for the United Nations. The Council also stresses that it is also important to ensure that, while meeting demand for new peacekeeping operations, the resources available for, and effective management of, the existing operations, are not adversely affected. At the same time it underscores the need for efficient and effective management of resources.

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"The Security Council calls upon Member States to contribute sufficient levels of trained troops, police and civilian personnel, including those with specialized capabilities and skills, bearing in mind the need for an increased percentage of female personnel at all decision-making levels as well as mobilization of logistic and administrative support, to allow the multiple operations to start optimally and fulfil their respective mandates in an effective manner. Enhancing the Secretariat's capacities and using them in a rational and efficient manner will constitute a crucial element of this response.

"The Security Council stresses also the need for improved integrated mission planning as well as enhanced capacity for rapid deployment of personnel and materiel to ensure efficient start-up of peacekeeping operations. The timely and adequate replenishment of strategic deployment stocks is essential to meet current and future demands.

"The Security Council recognizes the need to work, as appropriate, with regional and sub regional organizations and multinational arrangements in peacekeeping operations in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations to ensure complementary capacities and approaches before and during the deployment and after the withdrawal of UN peacekeeping missions.

"The Security Council recognizes its responsibility to provide clear, realistic and achievable mandates for peacekeeping missions. The Security Council values, in this regard, the assessments and recommendations provided by the Secretariat for informed decisions on the scope and composition of new peacekeeping operations as well as their mandates, concept of operations and force levels and structures.

"The Security Council believes that there is need to strengthen the relationship between those who plan, mandate and manage Peacekeeping Operations, and those who implement the mandates for these operations. Troop contributing countries, through their experience and expertise, can greatly contribute to the planning process and can assist the Security Council in taking appropriate, effective and timely decisions on peacekeeping operations. The Council recognizes, in this regard, that the meetings and mechanisms established by its resolution 1353 serve to facilitate the consultations process.

"The Security Council recognizes that in peacekeeping operations there are contributors, other than troop contributing countries, whose views should also be taken into account as appropriate.

"The Security Council stresses that, in challenging environments, United Nations peacekeepers may need to be provided with sufficiently robust rules of engagement and the necessary military resources to enable them to fulfil their mandate and, if necessary, to defend themselves. In all cases, the Security Council considers the safety and security of all United Nations personnel to be a priority. It stresses, in this context, the importance of enhanced capacity to gather and manage information in the field.

"The Security Council takes notes of recent efforts to increase coordination between missions in adjacent countries and encourages SRSGs to explore synergies to ensure effective management of peacekeeping missions in the same regions or sub-regions.

"The Security Council stresses the need to regularly assess the size, mandate and structure of peacekeeping operations with a view to making the necessary adjustments, including downsizing, where appropriate, according to progress achieved. It also encourages the continued commitment of the international community to consolidate and sustain the peace on the ground during and beyond the life of the mission.

"The Security Council further recognizes the importance of a gender perspective, including gender training for peacekeepers, in Peacekeeping Operations, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and the importance of protection of children in armed conflict in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1379 (2001).

"The Council recognizes the increased risk of the spread of communicable diseases and certain criminal activities in post-conflict areas. The Council welcomes efforts by the Secretariat to sensitize peacekeeping personnel in the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases in compliance with Security Council Resolution 1308, and encourages the Secretariat to continue implementing its guidelines on prostitution and trafficking.

"The Security Council recognizes that effective peacekeeping operations should be part of an overall strategy to consolidate and sustain peace. In this regard, it stresses the need to ensure from the outset the coordination, coherence and continuity between the different parts of this overall strategy, in particular between peacekeeping and on the one hand and peace-building on the other hand. To this end, the Security Council encourages closer cooperation between all relevant UN agencies, funds and programmes and international financial institutions, regional and sub-regional organizations and the private sector. Ensuring lasting peace in the aftermath of conflict may require sustained support from the UN and its humanitarian and development partners.

"The Security Council notes that training is increasingly becoming a critical element in peacekeeping operations and recognizes the need to utilize the expertise of experienced troop contributing countries. It encourages international cooperation and support for the establishment of peacekeeping training centres which could provide a wide range of training opportunities to new and emerging troop contributors.

"The Security Council recognizes that meeting the demands of an increasing number of UN peacekeeping missions will require the concerted efforts of the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Member States of the United Nations and the Secretary-General so as to ensure the necessary resources and operational support are provided. The Council encourages follow-up consultations on the surge in demand and invites the Secretary-General to provide regularly in a timely manner to member States assessments of evolving needs and shortfalls in UN peacekeeping, in order to identify critical gaps and unmet requirements as well as steps required to meet these.

"The Security Council underscores the useful role of its Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations in the consultation process at different stages of peacekeeping operations. It encourages the Working Group to pay special

attention to matters relating to the surge in demand in UN peacekeeping over the coming year and, as necessary, to report to the Council.

"The Security Council pays high tribute to all the men and women who have served and continue to serve in United Nations peacekeeping operations for their high level of professionalism, dedication and courage. It honours the memory of those who lost their lives in the service of the United Nations and the noble cause of peace."